

## OCCASIONAL NOTES.

### NO. I.

#### ANTIQUITY OF MAN IN AUSTRALIA.

In 1890 there appeared a short paper by myself, "Has Man a Geological History in Anstralia?"<sup>1</sup> being an analysis of the statements relative to the supposed discovery of human teeth in the Wellington Cave bone-deposits by Mr. Gerard Krefft. That teeth were found appeared to be an established fact, but that these were taken from the *bona-fide* bone-breccia did not then appear to be satisfactorily decided, hence the conclusion of "not proven" arrived at.

Two other points, however, were unknown to me at the time I wrote. The first was that Krefft had figured one of the molar teeth, and the second that at the time of his severance from the Museum, or thereabouts, he had a work in preparation on our Post-Tertiary Mammals, which apparently was to be called "Australian Fossil Remains."

In 1882 there appeared in the published "Votes and Proceedings of the Legislative Assembly" a parliamentary paper, "Exploration of the Caves and Rivers of New South Wales,"<sup>2</sup> to which were attached a number of plates of Wellington Cave fossils; some of these were photographic reproductions (thirteen plates), the remainder lithographs, numbered Plates 1 to 18. Figs. 3 and 4 of Pl. 12 are two views of a human molar tooth.

The explanations of these lithographic plates, accompanied by a number of disjointed notes, are amongst the Krefft MSS. now preserved in the Mitchell Library. With the view of endeavouring to recognise as many as possible of the original specimens in the Museum Collection, Mr. W. W. Thorpe spent some days at the Library, and through the courtesy of Mr. H. Wright, the Librarian, was able to transcribe copious extracts. The two most important points revealed were the following:—In the explanation of Plate 12, we read in *Kreffft's own handwriting*—"Figs. 3 and 4. Side view, natural size, and view from above enlarged of a human molar tooth, taken from the solid breccia of Wellington Cave by the writer."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Proc. Linn. Soc. N.S. Wales, v., pt. 2., 1890, p. 259.

<sup>2</sup> Votes and Proceedings of the Legislative Assembly, Sydney, v., 1882, p.p. 551-602.

<sup>3</sup> The italics are mine.

Next, attached to one of these documents (A263) is what appears to be a small plan of the work going on at the caves under Krefft's supervision, but possibly prepared by the workman in charge, giving depths and details. As a footnote to this plan occurs the following remark:—"In well-hole where Krefft found human skeleton in red breccia."

Now, (1) from the evidence I collected at the time I previously wrote on this subject, I arrived at the conclusion that the teeth in question were discovered on the present-day floor of a cave, but we are now faced with Krefft's written statement that these teeth were taken by himself from the breccia *in situ*; (2) from the brief information on the face of this MS. plan (and there appears to be no question of its genuineness), it would appear that Mr. Krefft did find, at some time during the exploration of the Wellington Caves, the work being then under his control, not only the teeth, but a human skeleton therein also.

The occurrence of the molar teeth in the breccia may render a modification in the former verdict of "not proven" necessary, but little deduction can be derived from the skeleton occurrence until further evidence is forthcoming of its precise position in the cave deposit.

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